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Environmental Protection
Agency

Region 5
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Illinois, Indiana,
Michigan, Minnesota,
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Environmental NEWS RELEASE



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EPA SETTLES WITH STERN ESTATE; INCLUDES \$122,700 FINE

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 5 has recently settled an administrative civil complaint against Ernest Stern Estate (Pittsburgh, PA) for violating the Toxic Substances and Control Act (TSCA) at the former Schmidt's Brewery property (Cleveland, OH). Stern Estate will pay a \$122,700 fine.

Stern Estate was cited for improperly disposing, using, labeling, storing, and recording polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB's) during cleanup at the site.

The settlement also includes a timetable for completing the cleanup. If the project is not finished by July 8, Stern Estate could face up to \$1,000 per day in penalties. To date, all PCB's--which pose human health hazards--have been removed from the site. The remainder of the work includes installing a monitoring-well, taking ground-water and soil samples, and backfilling and grading the property.

"Although it has taken more time than expected, this settlement is a sound one because it ensures that the cleanup will protect human health and the environment, that those responsible are paying for it, and that it will

be finished in a matter of months," said Ullrich, acting regional administrator. "EPA has worked hard to keep the City of Cleveland heavily involved in all steps of the process."

PCB's are a group of toxic chemicals that were once widely used as industrial coolants and lubricants. EPA banned the manufacture of PCB's in 1979 because of evidence that they accumulate in the environment and present human health hazards. Under TSCA, EPA regulates the proper cleanup, disposal, marking, recordkeeping, storage, and limited use of PCB's to protect the public from these potentially dangerous chemicals.

The Schmidt's Brewery operated on the 11-acre site, located at East 93rd St. and Quincy Ave., until it was abandoned in 1984. In 1989, local authorities alerted EPA to the site when asbestos was discovered on the property. EPA then issued its initial legal action against Stern Estate-- which resulted in the estate conducting an asbestos cleanup, demolishing the on-site buildings, and paying a \$205,000 civil penalty under the Clean Air Act.

During the asbestos cleanup, workers found a spill from a vandalized PCB transformer in the basement of a flooded building. This discovery led to the PCB cleanup currently being conducted at the site.

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